

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [003] with the following amended paragraph:

[0001] A safety device of such type is disclosed in German patent document DE 28 56 437 C2. The actuating device comprises a lever, which in the event of a lateral crash, moves ~~the~~ a cushion element in the direction of an occupant position more quickly than the structure of the passenger compartment. ~~[[[.]]~~ The lever is arranged on ~~which~~ the cushion element is ~~arranged~~ and, moves in the same direction on account of the accidental impact. Although this arrangement improves occupant protection in lateral impact accidents, it does not achieve an optimum degree of protection because, despite the relatively fast deployment of the cushion element, the distance between the cushion element and the occupant is so large that a relative movement between the cushion element and the occupant cannot be eliminated completely.

Please replace paragraph [010] with the following amended paragraph:

[0010] In a particularly advantageous embodiment of the invention, the cushion element can be locked in a deployed position, so that the impact energy can be dissipated in the deployed state of the cushion element.

Please replace paragraph [0022] with the following amended paragraph:

[0022] An intermediate wall 22, which serves to reinforce the structure of the door [[7]] 8, is provided adjacent to the foam element 18, and bearing plate 24 is arranged adjacent to the intermediate wall 22. Arranged on the bearing plate 24 are a total of three foam elements, including an upper foam element 26, a central foam element 28 and a lower foam element 30. The foam elements 26 to 30 are of oblong form and extend in the direction of the interior space of the passenger compartment of the vehicle 2. An upper cushion element 32 is displaceably mounted between the upper foam element 26 and the central foam element 28, and correspondingly a lower cushion element 34 is displaceably mounted between the central foam element 28 and the lower foam element 30. The cushion elements 32 and 34 are connected to a stowage compartment 36 whose interior space can be accessed by pivoting open an armrest 38.